The true Intention, publick Use and Importance of Academick Education considered.

694.d 12
5

A

SERMON

Preached before the

UNIVERSITY of *OXFORD*,

At St. *MARY's*,

ON

ACT-SUNDAY, *July* 13. 1755.

By WILLIAM PARKER D.D.
Chaplain in Ordinary to His MAJESTY,
and F.R.S.

Publiſhed at the Requeſt of the Vice-Chancellor, and Heads of Houſes.

OXFORD,

Printed at the THEATRE for JAMES FLETCHER in the *Turl*; and Sold by R. BALDWIN at the *Roſe* in *Paternoſter-Row, London*. MDCCLV.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

PHILIPP. IV. 8.

Finally, Brethren, whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praiſe, think on theſe things.

IT is a great advantage to creatures ſituated under conditions of behaviour for the attainment of happineſs, to have the general out-lines of duty ſet before them in a conſpicuous light. We have in the text, a ſhort and clear ſummary of qualifications requiſite to compleat the chriſtian character. A character, which once rendered chriſtianity amiable to mankind in the face of its adverſaries: and if any true love of virtue prevailed as intimately, as it ought, upon many who pretend to be animated

thereby, the tendency of the goſpel ſtill to promote the ſame character would again recommend it to ſome of our modern deiſts, and unbelievers. The character is very extenſive: including not only the rules of rigid virtue, and of rough unpoliſhed honeſty, but all the delicacy of lovely, engaging conduct, and chaſte elegance of manners. We are commanded to purſue not only *whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, if there be any virtue* acknowledged in them: but alſo to adorn our chriſtian demeanour, and recommend it to the general eſteem of mankind, by ſtudying likewiſe *whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report, if there be any praiſe* juſtly to be aſcribed to them.

We are commanded to imitate ſuch conduct, as the firſt converts both learned, and received, and heard, and ſaw in a great maſter of addreſs, in a well-educated, diſcreet apoſtle. For thus he injoins, in the words immediately enſuing the text; *thoſe things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and ſeen in me, do; and the God of peace ſhall be with you.* Theſe things will infallibly procure for you ſolid peace and aſſurance of mind, with reſpect to the favour of God; who will alſo in ſuch man-

manner direct the world, that they ſhall in general obtain ſocial peace, good-will, and eſteem among all mankind.

Such a character, more generally cultivated in the chriſtian world, would be of great ſervice to the chriſtian cauſe. The ſceptick, whoſe pride would not ſuffer him to be convinced by chriſtian arguments, would be ſilenced by the polite lenity of chriſtian conduct. The fine gentleman could not any longer pretend to be aſhamed of being a chriſtian: becauſe the beſt chriſtian would be the gentleman of the moſt accompliſhed, and engaging manners. True chriſtian decorum, and a ſincere deſire to win all men, would wonderfully recommend chriſtianity to the love of all men.

But this conciliatory character, this chaſte deference to the eſteem and affections of men, which thus merits the regard of chriſtians in general, even for the ſake of chriſtianity, will particularly claim the attention of the chriſtian ſcholar; ought ſtill more eſpecially to be the reigning ornament of academick education. Such characters abounding in literary ſocieties will be their principal ſupport in civilized ſtates: the promotion of them demands, on this account, to be made a principal point of view in academick inſtitutions: and the obligation will

have

have it's influence upon thoſe, who deſire to recommend the places where themſelves were educated.

It may be ſaid perhaps, that the culture of truth is the principal intention of theſe retired ſeminaries. But it muſt be further urged, that theſe ſchools are ſet apart for the education of thoſe, who are to ſtudy likewiſe the recommendation of truth. It is a leſſon taught us even by a learned heathen, to employ ourſelves not only in inquiry after truth, but alſo after whatever is decent, and becoming. The leſſon will take up much time in learning, and applying it well: and therefore it is, that by his own example he requires us to be, as it were, wholly employed in the taſk. For every ſtation and rank in life, every ſociety of men, as well as each individual, hath it's proper character; it's proper decency and conſiſtency belonging to that character. And it is the injunction of the apoſtle that we ſhould meditate not only upon what is *true*; but alſo upon what is *lovely* in our ſtation, and *of good report*. Indeed whatever is lovely and of good report is a branch of truth to be ſtudied, becauſe it is a branch of conſiſtency with moral character.

There is indeed ſuch a thing, as rigid virtue, and rude enthuſiaſtick religion perſonal to a man's ſelf, without any regard to mankind. I

will

will not deny this to be virtue and religion. And perhaps it may ſometimes have it's uſes, without deſigning them. But *this* one may venture to affirm, that virtue and religion regardleſs of ſociety, and of the means whereby they may recommend themſelves to ſociety, will loſe above half their praiſe, becauſe they will loſe above half their beneficial uſe and effect. For man was not born merely to make himſelf happy. We are introduced as into a great theatre, and obliged to pleaſe, that we may improve many, who ſtand around us, in our action; in order that we may pleaſe, and receive approbation from the great maſter of rewards.

Thus hath the apoſtle opened a large field of meditation before us. I flatter myſelf, I ſhall have your candid attention, whilſt I enlarge a little, before this audience, upon ſuch qualities, as will ever be an ornament of learned ſocieties, are uſually preſcribed as a ſubject of joint prayer before this congregation, and will ever vindicate academick inſtitutions. For religion, learning, virtue, and good manners will render every ſociety, that duly cultivates them, greatly beneficial in example, as well as inſtruction, to the commonwealth. Some few remarks then upon the virtues recommended in the text, as proper objects of academick diſcipline, will ſhow the

uſe

uſe and importance of ſuch eſtabliſhments to the publick, and furniſh us with ſome few inferences deducible from the apoſtle's precept.

Truth then will be the firſt object of purſuit to the ſincerely moral, or religious agent. For upon this alone all moral action, or religious devotion can be rightly founded. Eſpecially ſhould it be the firſt object of impartial ſtudy in theſe ſeats, ſacred to ſedate inquiry after truth, and it's confirmation. Some kind of receſs therefore from the world is the very intention of theſe ſocieties. Yet they are not on this account, to be entirely regardleſs of the world, it's intereſts, or good eſteem: ſince they are deſigned for nurſeries of education to perſons, who are ſoon to be uſhered into the world, to act a part and maintain a character in it. There may be various kinds of truth propoſed for the exerciſe of young minds within theſe ſeats: all tending to the glory of God; many in their eſſential conſequences to the immediate benefit of mankind. The apoſtle's injunction is univerſal: *Whatſoever things are true*, are a deſerving object of meditation to the chriſtian in general: much more to the chriſtian ſcholar: he means not indeed all ſuch as are trivial, but ſuch as are uſeful, and in any degree important. For truths

of

of various ſorts become proper objects of learning, under different degrees of importance, as they affect mankind under various capacities, and relations, whether as individuals, or as ſocial beings, whether as inhabitants of this world, or candidates for a better: truths introductive to ſeveral ſciences, and profeſſions: truths common to all ſciences; and eſſential to all. Theſe are ſtiled firſt principles, as being firſt foundations of ſcience, on which the future ſuperſtructure in knowledge is to be raiſed. Theſe firſt principles are a kind of intuitive knowledge, or neceſſary truths reſulting from the common ſenſe and reaſon of mankind, univerſally confirmed by the unanimous aſſent, and common experience of mankind in all ages.

How diſcouraging then, I might have ſaid, how inconſiſtent with the cauſe of ſcience, is the requeſt of a late noble ſceptick, who would perſwade us to ſet aſide all firſt principles: that is, to ſet aſide the common ſenſe and reaſon of mankind, and, at this age of the world, to enter upon our journey in ſcience only by induction from experiments! It is, to ſet aſide the experience of all former ages, in order to begin to argue from experience: to ſet aſide all ancient obſervation, and maxims founded upon univerſal obſervation: to ſet aſide univerſal aſſent, found-

ed principally upon experimental knowledge, whatever he may think of it, in order to begin to argue from the partial obſervations of one perſon, age, or country: a great compliment certainly to the ſagacity of that perſon, age, or country! In ſhort to reject the truths proved by the reſearches of all our anceſtors in ſcience; and, if I may uſe the expreſſion, to begin the world again in knowledge: to replace mankind back in the very infancy of ſcience: though ſucceſſive improvements in many practical arts, built upon ancient eſtabliſhed principles, have proved, that there was ſome truth in thoſe principles; and that we have frequently been obliged to our anceſtors for the maxims they have left us, yea even for abſtract principles, and rules of reaſoning.

The apoſtle's expreſſion ſeems to ſuppoſe many truths eſtabliſhed; as the next words ſeem to imply, that we know in general, what is *juſt*, and *pure*; and he directs the meditations of the thoughtful chriſtian to all ſuch intereſting principles as are thus eſtabliſhed. He does not confine our reſearches, as ſome would limit them, merely to the letter of holy ſcripture: for many ſciences may be neceſſary to the full underſtanding of holy ſcripture: as figures and alluſions are taken from many: and ſome of the moſt inſtructive fathers, and moſt rational commentators

mentators upon ſcripture have been thoſe, who had been moſt converſant in various other ſciences.

The truths of revelation indeed will be neceſſary ſubjects of ſerious examination to beings, whoſe views naturally reach out towards ſomething further than natural powers can enable them to aſcertain objects with ſufficient clearneſs: into regions, where, whatever the infidel may think, natural reaſon ſtrongly points out intereſts to them. Application then to the ſacred volumes will be moſt ſalutary and advantageous, and can by none with ſafety be totally omitted, as comprehending the whole will of the deity concerning us; who firſt called us into exiſtence, and gives us all our faculties of thinking. But ſtill the attendance on this ſtudy will be variouſly proportioned to other reſpective engagements in life. All virtuous exerciſes of the underſtanding, as they ſerve to ſtrengthen the intellect, have their ſpecial uſes in academick ſocieties; where objects of ſcience are ſet forth in common. The application of principles is to be made afterwards, when the ſtudent launches forth into the world, according to the occaſions, or exigencies of ſociety, and his own particular profeſſion therein. The apoſtle opens to our range the whole field of truth. All the wonders of nature, and the whole diſplay of divine power, wiſdom, and

goodneſs in the ſpiritual or material world become proper objects of contemplation to the rational ſoul: and the more it expatiates in this field, the more will it find reaſon to admire and adore the great creator.

The foundations of truth being laid, he directs our meditations in the next place to ſuch things as are calculated to gain reſpect, or due veneration; ὅσα σεμνὰ: whatſoever things are reſpectable, or calculated to gain the regard due to any ſtation, wherein providence hath placed us, for the good of the moral ſyſtem: whether to the private chriſtian, as inveſted with the chriſtian character: or to the chriſtian dignified with any publick office for the common benefit of ſociety wherein he reſides. Each is exhorted to walk worthy of his vocation. For a certain kind of dignity or reſpect, greater or leſs, attends every rank, and vocation in life: and whoever is duly attentive to the means of obtaining it, to it's cauſes and conſequences, will ſoon find it's importance: whoever is duly obſervant at the ſame time of the tempers of men with whom he converſes, will find, that dignity is to be maintained, not by rigid gravity, or ſullen moroſeneſs on the one hand, nor yet by trivial levity, and flattering obſequiouſneſs on the other.

For

For as the one will perſonally diſguſt; and thus obſtruct that affection of eſteem, which is a main ſupport of true dignity: ſo the other is a natural oppoſition to all dignity in itſelf. A character truly reſpectable, like what is ſaid of virtue, will in general conſiſt in a happy medium of deportment between auſterity and levity. Without obſervance of this golden medium, the higheſt ſtation may miſs of reſpect: whilſt the loweſt, even poverty and indigence, with proper conduct, may ſecure it. For the diſcreetly good man will be reſpectable, and reſpected in every ſituation.

Too many perſons now adays act, as if they did not deſire reſpect, and then complain, that they have it not. For of the two extreams abovementioned, that of thoughtleſs levity and giddineſs ſeems to have too greatly the aſcendancy in the preſent age. To this inadvertency it is owing, that many ſtart up into men, before they are well-apprized, that they are advanced above the years of childhood: and many ſlide down into old age, before they have well begun, or are well prepared to act the part of men. Through this levity, and it's attendant vices, they loſe the reſpect of manhood, of old age, of ſuperior rank or fortune. For nothing can more effectually tend to bring all orders and

ſtations

ſtations to a level, than promiſcuous diſſoluteneſs, and general licentiouſneſs of manners.

The proper ſedateneſs inſtilled by academick education, and a few years regular ſubmiſſion to academick diſcipline, will have a ſtrong influence to prevent, or to correct this levity in minds where vicious example may have introduced it. They will here be taught by the dictates of ancient authors, and ſages of renown, that whatever behaviour ſecures true reſpect muſt be conſiſtent with character, conſiſtent with honeſty, conſiſtent with honour, and the relative honour particularly required in that ſtation. Wherefore the word among the Latins is often render'd *honeſtum*; which implies all theſe qualities. Whereas the engliſh word *honeſt*, as it is tranſlated in the text, does not ſo fully anſwer the idea of the greek word σεμνὰ. We may remark however, that this injunction of the apoſtle ſhould be a recommendation of chriſtian religion to our men of profeſſed honour. For if this be their grand fundamental of duty, they have here a full direction to act according to it. But then at the ſame time it ought not to exclude out of moral character other principles or virtues: being founded in, or eſſentially coincident with them. For true honour will always have regard to juſtice, with which it is here joined

joined by the apoſtle, as a companion; ὅσα σεμνὰ, ὅσα ἁγνὰ.

The elements of juſtice, flowing from the natural relations of mankind, ſeemingly connected with the very nature of moral agents, of all eſpecially whoſe ſphere of activity reaches beyond themſelves, aud who may either affect, or be affected by the actions of other beings, will neceſſarily demand the attention of all, whoſe happineſs is ſo deeply founded in ſocial welfare. The principles of natural law are thoſe eſtabliſhed rules of right and equity, which one rational agent may expect from another. On the obſervance of theſe the happineſs of ſocial beings is made dependent in the order of nature. They are what the plan of nature, directive to ſocial welfare, according to the divine eſtabliſhment, preſcribes. The principles are general; to be imbibed early; that particular caſes may afterwards be ſolved thereby: conſequences muſt be deduced, and rules learnt whereby the deductions may be ſecurely made.

Young perſons are apt to complain of the dryneſs of the early ſtudies preſcribed to them in this place: that the grammar of ſciences, if I may ſo ſtile it, is dull. And it is no wonder, if to many it ſhould ſo appear. The caſe is, they

fit

want to haſten into active life, before they are fit for it. Speculation is too abſtracted, and requires too much ſedateneſs for their volatile ſpirits, eager to be engaged in action. Many parents are too apt to encourage this forwardneſs; and thereby ruin many children. For the elements of practical wiſdom are neceſſary to be learnt. But when is this grammar to be learnt ſo eaſily as in youth? It will be the ſecurity of theſe initiates in life, at leaſt a ſecurity of the ſtate, wherein they are to converſe, that they ſhould be acquainted with the principles of moral action, before they enter upon action. For the conduct of every individual will in ſome degree affect the community. General abſtract rules, whereof experience alone can ſhew the full uſe, may perhaps appear dull to young minds, for this reaſon, among others, becauſe uſually comprized in general, abſtract terms. The meaning of theſe terms is obſcure, or not familiar to them, becauſe remote from common life, and converſation. Their inexperience veils over the uſes, which their forefathers have felt; who compiled theſe epitomes of ſcience. But let them wait a little: let them learn the language of equity: let them pay a deference to the experience of the aged, and attend to the leſſons of active, prudent men, who have gone before them!

them! Life will then ſoon teach them to apply the rules to advantage. *Days will ſpeak: and Multitude of years will teach wiſdom.* The benefit of what youthful memory had treaſured up will ſoon be felt. The application of rules will afford delight: and the delight of doing good, under daily exigencies of ſocial life, will urge them forwards to daily improvements in the knowledge of ſocial equity. No man ever yet repented his early attendance upon the ſtudy of natural juſtice, who endeavoured to conform his own life, and that of his fellow-beings to the dictates of juſtice.

The welfare of ſociety, and the ſecurity of individuals requires, that the principles of juſtice, and the rules of deduction from thence ſhould be well-underſtood in ſtates. And in proportion as theſe ſhall be more or leſs preciſely defined and aſcertained, communities will be rightly eſteemed more or leſs civilized. The honour of a nation therefore, as well as the happineſs of its private members, demands attendance upon theſe ſtudies. And the greater the attendance and encouragement ſhall be, which is given to theſe ſtudies in our two ancient ſeats of literature, the leſs reaſon will remain to be pleaded for any precipitancy in ſending young perſons abroad, during the moſt perilous age of life, un-

der a proſpect of purſuing this part of knowledge more ſucceſsfully.

The principles of this branch of ethical ſcience may become a proper object of conſideration to young perſons ſituated here, under different views and intentions. Some will hereafter be called forth to inveſtigate caſes of civil difficulty: ſome to explain the obligations of juſtice in ſocial life, and to inforce the practice thereof upon their fellow-beings by motives of nature, moral duty, and religion: ſome to execute the ſanctions of civil juſtice: ſome to determine caſes of diſtributive juſtice: ſome to be concerned in enacting, or maintaining laws of commutative juſtice. Particular ſtudies may be directed, according to the province, which the ſtudent deſigns to undertake. But there are fundamental principles common, and eſſential to *all*. It is proper that *all* ſhould know the grounds upon which laws are founded. They are rules and precepts of ſocial conduct, grounded upon nature, inforced upon the members of civil bodies, for publick good, by proper ſanctions and authority. The elements of civil law may be conſidered as grammars of equity deduced from nature. Let young perſons reflect a little within themſelves upon the benefit which they feel from their remembrance of the rules of gram-

mar

mar in language. Irkſome, and uſeleſs as theſe rules might have appeared to them, when firſt learnt, in childhood, yet when they now come to converſe familiarly with ancient authors, to embrace the counſels of them that have lived many ages before them, in diſtant regions, to form accurate judgments upon their works and ſtyle, the rules are found beneficial, and the recollection pleaſant. Now what grammar is in languages, the elements of ſeveral ſciences, of logick, metaphyſicks, ethicks, natural juſtice, and ſuch like, are in philoſophy and ſpeculation; preparatives for active life; the firſt ſtamina of future regular knowledge. Theſe ſtamina ſhould be early combined and fitly joined together, that by gradual increaſe of ſcience, a well compacted able conſtitution may in due time of maturity be formed. Never can ſure foundations be more opportunely laid, than within theſe ſeminaries of learning, in the ſeaſon of youth, that life afterwards may admit time to raiſe an uſeful and convenient ſuperſtructure.

But, that a purity of intellect may be preſerved for ſtudy, let a purity of morals be carefully cultivated within theſe ſeats; and let us ſtrictly follow the apoſtle's next direction, in fixing our affections upon *whatſoever things are pure.*

For it is well known to experience, that ſenſuality, and looſe indulgences will grievouſly impair the intellect, and deprave the judgment. They will ſet the man at variance with truth, with juſtice, with principles of ſolid ſcience, with his fellow-beings, and with himſelf. They will render it oftentimes his apparent intereſt not to find things as they really are, and conſequently make it his endeavour to find them otherwiſe than they really are. His ſtudy will be to deceive himſelf: and then it is no wonder, if he falls into error in the moſt important concerns: no wonder, that when vice, ignorance, and ill-judgment have taken poſſeſſion of the ſort, truth and ſalutary knowledge ſhould not be permitted to enter. Let young perſons therefore guard well the ſprings, from whence *are the iſſues of life*; cautious of admitting habits of vice into their minds, let them open all its avenues to uſeful ſcience; jealous of any corrupt maxims that may be inſtilled by libertines. The retirement of theſe ſeats from the gay and giddy world, the wholeſome diſcipline inſtituted therein to oppoſe the inſinuations of the corrupted part, are favourable tuitions to the pure mind: circumſtances favourable to the cauſe of early virtue.

Who-

Whoever duly conforms himſelf to that diſcipline, ſtudious to recommend himſelf as an uſeful member of ſociety, will at the ſame time induſtriouſly comply with the two laſt parts of the apoſtle's precept, as virtues of accompliſhment in the chriſtian character; he will frequently meditate, or, as the original word may imply, will meditate ſo, as to eſtimate their true value, upon *whatſoever things are lovely, and of good report.* For I ſhall comprize theſe two remaining characters in one. Becauſe, though whatever is lovely may, through envy and depravity of the world, not at all times obtain a good report: yet whatever is truly amiable in itſelf will at all times deſerve it: will for the moſt part obtain it too, from all, whoſe eſteem is truly valuable: and as for all the reſt, it is rather riotous fickle noiſe of popular voice, than truly *good report.*

A kind of natural ſatisfaction in the good eſteem of mankind, from the accompliſhment of ſuch undertakings as are the common objects of praiſe, is wiſely implanted by providence for wiſe and uſeful purpoſes; as an incitement to actions which are in themſelves excellent and amiable. And it is here acknowledged, nay urged by the apoſtle, as a worthy motive of action. We are exhorted

exhorted by him to have our view directed to *whatſoever things are of good report*. For there is a beauty and gracefulneſs in the decorum of moral character, naturally pleaſing to all minds, as there is a beauty in the proportion of natural bodies agreeable to all eyes. This pleaſing ſenſe of beauty, I ſay, is no doubt implanted by the creator for wiſe and good ends; to recommend the excellence of moral character, or the fitneſs of well-adjuſted proportion in bodies, to the admiration, and eſteem of men: that they may be eagerly impelled, as it were, by this inſtinctive ſenſe, to cultivate, and improve, and make a right application of what is thus agreeable to the ſight, and human ſoul. For the natural affections are the inſtinct that excite mankind to action. They are the moving gale: reaſon is the pilot deſigned to guide the veſſel.

This ſenſe of beauty in decorum, or what I may call moral proportion, appears to be natural, becauſe univerſal; not confined to particular nations, or ages, or climates; but in ſome degree diffuſed through the whole human ſpecies: in ſome places, or inſtances perhaps, like other ſenſations, depraved by falſe habit, or national cuſtom, but no where totally extinguiſhed.

Whoever

Whoever then ſhall endeavour to degrade this natural ſentiment into an imputation of weakneſs, as a [a] late noble writer hath attempted to do, repreſenting it as founded in human pride, and only a vanity in human nature, will in the event be diſcover'd to have pride and vanity enough in himſelf to contradict the univerſal ſenſe, I had almoſt ſaid the natural inſtinct, of all mankind. He will ſtrongly evince the truth of an old remark, that the enemies to chriſtian revelation are at the ſame time enemies to moral virtue: he will be an enemy to the moſt refined branch of moral virtue, and for this reaſon probably ſo inveterate an adverſary to chriſtian religion above all others, becauſe this religion is the beſt friend to modeſty, to decorum, and to virtue in general. But no wonder, that a man ſhould thus endeavour to root up the very foundations of decorum, who could write in favour of inceſt, and take his model of conjugal fidelity from Turkey: who could aſcribe to the worſt, and loweſt of motives one ſpecies of modeſty univerſally natural, to a deſire only of obtaining "[b] a more uncontrolled, and undiſturbed gratifi-"cation of ſenſual appetite."

---

a Bolingb. Philoſoph. Works, Vol. 4. p. 126-7. Octav. Edit.
b Ib. 127.

What

What he advances concerning modeſty is not only ſhocking to the ears of grave, philoſophick ſcholars, whom he aſſerts to have taken [a] "a great "deal of dull pains" in defending it, though Cicero be in the number of it's advocates, but muſt neceſſarily be ſo likewiſe to every man of polite thought; to every man that has any ſenſe of delicacy, I had almoſt ſaid, of common humanity. For baniſh modeſty; and you with it baniſh one of the moſt refined virtues which can diſtinguiſh, and give luſtre to human nature. Baniſh decorum; and you with it baniſh a moſt civilized, cementing virtue: a virtue, which reſtrains from ſavage brutality, and is one of the beſt ornaments, and guardians of almoſt every other virtue: a virtue, of which the civilized part of mankind have ever retained a moſt delicate ſenſibility, and the more they were civilized, the quicker was their ſenſe of the accompliſhment, and the more delighted were they with the ſenſation. But ſtill a ſenſe thereof has in ſome degree been natural to *all*, even to the moſt unrefined. And upon the rudiments of nature it was, that art ſucceſsfully proceeded in civilizing men. For if, as our [b] author himſelf preſumes his own papers to have ſhewn, there be ſuch a

---

a Ib. 126. b ib. 154.

thing

thing as a law of nature: we may with equal right aſſume, that decency is a branch of it; that there is ſuch a law as natural ſhame, modeſty, and decorum.

Let us hear a little what the [a] great Roman orator, who was, at leaſt, as good a philoſopher, as good a judge of nature, and natural obligations, as the late noble ſceptick; let us hear what that diligent inquirer had to ſay upon the foundations of modeſty, and decorum. "He "aſſerts it to be a remarkable privilege of the "human race, that of all creatures, man alone "can diſcern what order and decency are, and "determine the proper bounds of moderation: "that of the objects of ſight no other being can "determine the beauty and gracefulneſs and ſym-"metry of parts: but that reaſon in man can "transfer theſe ideas from material objects to the "mind; and thence conclude that there is much "more beauty, and conſiſtency, and regularity "to be obſerved in words and actions; leſt any "thing be done in an unbecoming manner: that "nature hath aſſigned to man this character of "great preeminence above other animals, a cha-"racter of conſtancy, moderation, and modeſty: "that a firſt obligation deducible from this duty

a Tull. de Offic. Lib. 1. cap. 4, 28 &c.

"of decorum is, to behave ourſelves agreeably "to nature; that its influence will be ſeen in re- "gulating our conduct by nature: that our con- "duct will be then approved, when it is con- "formed to nature: in ſhort, that accompliſhed "virtue and decorum are convertible terms, and "coincident in their very eſſence: that what is "compleatly virtuous is decent, and what is decent "is virtuous. From hence we ſee what this great philoſopher thought of modeſty; that it is a virtue founded in nature, and the natural rela- tions of things, not dependent upon cuſtom or faſhion, or vain imaginations and caprices of man, or pride of man.

But we chriſtians have fundamental principles to inforce the virtue by ſtill an higher authority than the mere deductions of man. Let us paſs then from the Roman to the great chriſtian ora- tor; who, of the two, will always have the greater weight in this place, though leſs perhaps with the noble author's friends. A full compre- henſive precept of decorum is delivered to us in the text. And in his own example no man could be more obſervant of decorum than St. Paul. He hath left us a ſpeedy, ingenuous apology for himſelf, when he once had inadvertently tranſ- greſſed it, before the high-prieſt. His ſpeeches be- fore Felix, and king Agrippa, his epiſtle to Phi-

lemon,

lemon, and many paſſages of thoſe to the Corinthians are maſterly inſtances of modeſt and polite addreſs. They are proofs that the apoſtle muſt have been ſtudious of all the becoming methods of demeanor, and application to the hearts of men, who could thus command them upon every fit occaſion, with ſo much readineſs and genteel facility.

Thus have I enlarged, perhaps longer than your patience can well excuſe me, upon the ſeveral heads of duty contained in the precept of the text; urging them not merely as of natural and chriſtian obligation, but as neceſſary branches alſo of academick diſcipline. For as duties of practice indeed they become ſubjects of daily regard to every chriſtian; but as matters of ſcience they become, in places of liberal education, ſubjects of early inquiry to the induſtrious ſtudent: that by general principles treaſured up in ſeaſon particular practice may afterwards be well-conducted: that the ſervant of God whether in the miniſtry of the church, or any civil office of the ſtate, may in his province be able to ſatisfy the ſcrupulous, to reclaim the vicious, and to confirm the well-diſpoſed mind: that in doubtful caſes, he may be furniſhed with materials for the ſolution of difficulties. For doubtful caſes will ariſe from

the various occurrences of life, under every head of duty; and the dubious mind is to be rendered eaſy and ſecure. Maxims and diſtinctions early learnt will ſeaſonably occur, for the ſolution of ſcruples in others, or the prevention of them in ourſelves: peace to our own minds, and to thoſe of our fellow members in ſociety, will be preſerved. Nature here will proceed a great way in pointing out what duty is: natural conſcience will ſuggeſt much: natural ſentiments of truth, juſtice, and decorum will preſent themſelves: theſe in general will be the ſame, or analogous at leaſt amongſt all mankind, where nature has not been greatly violated by long habits of national vice. But ſtill natural reaſon is weak: and wherever it *is* weak, chriſtian revelation comes in graciouſly to its ſuccour. Yet the books of revelation will in ſome inſtances want to be explained, at this diſtance of time from their firſt delivery. Cuſtoms, figures, and alluſions become obſcured by antiquity. Theſe are to be inveſtigated. Here then ancient truth becomes an object of purſuit: the ſcholar muſt retire back into preceding days: he muſt retire from his acquaintance into diſtant climes: he muſt travel many hours within his own cloſet. But though he ſometimes ſecludes himſelf from mankind, he muſt not be entirely negligent of the intereſts of mankind:

mankind: though he is frequently out of the world, yet he muſt be like thoſe that are ſometimes in it. Here the other parts of the apoſtle's precept will come with full force upon him, to attend to juſtice, character, and decorum.

The inſtitution of our academick diſcipline will be fully recommended by arguments ſuggeſted in the foregoing remarks. Many are the advantages which attend this, and her ſiſter nurſery of learning within this kingdom: ſome of them almoſt peculiar to themſelves, *all* friendly to pure and polite literature. It would be needleſs to enlarge here upon the benefits, which you feel, much better than I can expreſs, from the very ample collections of writings ready to be conſulted, both in ancient and modern ſcience: the rules and cuſtoms inſtituted for the promotion of true religion, and ſound morality: the ſtated calls of daily addreſs in publick devotion to the great diſpenſer of all intellectual abilities: the hours appointed for regular application to ſtudy: the diſtinct ſocieties into which the ſtudents are diſtributed by their ſeveral founders, for more commodious regulation: the walls to ſeclude from the converſe of the unlearned, and to confine within proper limits of inſpection: the officers within thoſe walls to guard: the tutors to convey

convey inſtruction: the returns of publick exerciſe to excite emulation: all theſe wiſe inſtitutions conſpire in promoting one great and good deſign. You cannot overlook one emolument ariſing from the connexion of ſtudents among themſelves, reſiding within private walls, reſtrained in ſome meaſure, whether they will, or no, to literate converſation; which will incidentally at leaſt intrude itſelf upon them within thoſe walls. That friendly commerce of learning, and eaſy exchange of knowledge, which by familiar intercourſes is carried on within theſe ſeats, is a great improvement to the labours of the young induſtrious ſtudent. Hereby he oftentimes gains much ſcience without the trouble of ſearching deeply after it; and gleans at proper ſeaſons of the day from the fields of others, whilſt his own harveſt is ſown early, and grows up amply at home in his morning hours. But let him remember, that a ſtock of ſcience muſt carefully be laid in betimes, that he may thus communicate, and receive mutual benefit: he muſt be acquainted with the merchandice of the country in which he trafficks, and have ſomething valuable to give, or elſe he will gain but little by the correſpondence.

It is often ſaid, let the young perſon, to be polite, learn men betimes. But alas! it is often dangerous

dangerous to learn men too ſoon, without proper principles to guard againſt them. Let him firſt liſten to univerſal rules in hiſtory, founded on the experience of ages, concerning the wiles of men, the arts of ſeduction, the inſinuations of evil morals. Then let him ſtep forth, clad in the armour of truth and righteouſneſs, and even then warily truſt himſelf before the adverſary. For it is ſaid by an apoſtle, and a ſaying it is too well grounded in experience, *that evil communications will corrupt good manners*; much more will they be ready to introduce evil manners, where good ones have not already occupied the ſoil.

It is not difficult to perceive how premature acquaintance with the world, under the modern name of travelling, becomes perilous to very young, untutored minds. The moſt glaring characters, and ſuch as are moſt likely to affect them are not always the moſt ſtrictly virtuous. Men of the brighteſt natural abilities may, according to the ſtate of human depravity, be tinctured with ſome prevailing vice or error. Many ſplendid qualifications in the example may recommend the vice; perhaps dignify luxury, debauchery, or impiety with the name of politeneſs, and eſtabliſh a vicious faſhion in a country. If

a young

a young creature then ſhall be permitted to paſs through many countries, unguarded by any ſteady principles of virtue or religion, liable to ſuck in every error, to imbibe a tincture from every vice, that ſhall ſtrike his imagination, or fall in with his complexion, in every character, which he eſteems polite, in every country, through which he paſſes, no wonder, if he ſhould return home, as he went out, without any ballaſt of judgment, an unhappy compound of vice and error, refined only in falſe notions of politeneſs, imagining himſelf accompliſhed and adorned in that, which may in reality be the degradation of human nature. For what he thinks well-eſteemed, he will learn to imitate; and ſo gather vice, as he travels through the world, even out of a good-natured fondneſs to pleaſe, and recommend himſelf to the world. The authority of the parent is at a diſtance: he has perhaps none, or no faithful monitor to controll his appetites: and reaſon is not yet ſtrong enough to hold the reins: ſhame and modeſty loſe much of their reſtraint in a country unknown; which will be ſoon left; to which no return will be made; in which no future reproach can be heard: thus temptation and licentiouſneſs riot unoppoſed: he ſtays not long enough to ſee the unhappy conſequence of the

vice

vice, either in health, family, or fortune to his favourite exemplar; and he returns home only to make an unhappy experiment in himself. This is but too often the case of uneducated travellers. Whereas a few years properly employed within either of our seminaries of science at home, would furnish their minds with directing principles of religion and morality, to guard them against corruption: and with natural and civil knowledge, to qualify them for conversation and beneficial correspondence with the best and most accomplished men of all countries. Some such well secured examples have you not long ago sent forth from hence; who have done credit, both in their own, and foreign countries, to the place of their education: and you have other examples, of high rank, and fortune, among those that are now committed to your care; who promise to become equal ornaments.

But it is surely, it is experimentally found dangerous to dismiss the infant mind abroad, as soon as it is inclined to take it's flight, vague, and unstable, unguarded, and unrestrained, to wander, it knows not why, nor whither; to pick up scatter'd seeds at random in it's flight, over the face of the earth: where it may frequently meet with poison, instead of food; and suck in venom, for proper nourishment. The

young traveller ſhould carry ſome proviſion with him, and be taught how to gather more with ſafety.

Even to manhood, deſtitute of ſound principle, the looſe converſe of the world will rather add corruption, than inſtill uſeful knowledge. And the late noble ſceptick, who hath appeared ſo ſtrenuous an advocate for vice and infidelity, ſo inveterate an adverſary to ſcience, to modeſty, to all religion, and the moſt comfortable of all human hopes, could not probably have made ſo great advances in impiety, had he not employed himſelf many years abroad, as well as at home, in gleaning up every little grain of irreligion, every little ſeed of objection which had been induſtriouſly ſown, or careleſly ſcattered upon the face of the earth, by every enemy of true philoſophy, either in his own, or foreign countries. For his late unphiloſophick legacy is ſcarce any thing more than an indigeſted farrago of ſuch borrowed, frequently confuted, objections.

However, from what hath been ſaid one ſerious inference ariſes, reſpecting thoſe, who are concerned in the tuition of youth, within this, and her renowned ſiſter ſeminary: to take great care, how any one give reaſon of complaint, that the morals, or inſtruction of thoſe placed under

thier

their care, are neglected within theſe ſeats. For, if they do, great will be the reproach and the injury, by their negligence brought upon theſe ſchools. Much will be required at their hands both by God and man. For if, according to the ſon of Sirach, *the bread of the needful be the life of the poor*, and ſevere be the imputation upon him, who defraudeth them of *the meat which periſheth*, how much more juſtly ſevere will the ſentence be againſt him, who defraudeth them, that hunger after living knowledge, of the bread which might *endure unto eternal life! But I am perſuaded better things of you, my brethren, and things accompanying ſalvation* both to yourſelves, and many others.

One remark indeed may be made, in favour of our academick diſcipline, from it's nature in general: that the young pupil here can never totally be neglected: becauſe if his proper guardian be leſs faithful, than he ought, yet in every ſociety there are others conſtituted in publick office to ſupply, in ſome meaſure, the deficiency; to watch over morals; to give inſtructions in publick lectures; to exhort, admoniſh, and correct. A reſource, which cannot be ſo ſecurely provided for, where the immature pupil rambles from one nation to another, unacquainted with his own, under the care of one

ſingle preceptor, who may be faithleſs abroad, as well as at home, and where the unfaithfulneſs will be of more dreadful, irremediable conſequence.

But for the encouragement of thoſe, who are ſolicitouſly engaged here in the uſeful employment of tuition, one advantage may deſerve to be mentioned, incidentally ariſing to themſelves from the induſtrious diſcharge of their duty: that whilſt they diligently inſtruct others, they improve themſelves. Hints will ariſe for the illuſtration, or confirmation of their own knowledge, whilſt they are endeavouring to give clear and convincing evidence to others. The perſon then who is ſparing of that inſtruction, which he ought to give, will be proportionably penurious to himſelf of that which he might receive from his own induſtry in communicating knowledge: will ſeldom be found ſo ſtudious as he ought, by private cultivation beſtowed upon himſelf, to add to his own ſtock of ſcience. For where you cut off the drain, the canal will ſtagnate: but it muſt amply receive, while it amply conveys the living ſtream. Whereas ſtagnant knowledge will be apt to evaporate in forgetfulneſs. So that in reſpect to theſe two ſorts of perſons will be fully verified that ſaying of Solomon: *there is, that ſcattereth, and yet increaſeth;*

creaſeth; and there is, that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.

May every one in theſe ſocieties, who hath any concern for the reputation of the community, wherein he reſideth, diſcharge punctually the duty of his reſpective province, whether in private tuition, or in publick diſcipline! And then no objection can ariſe to academick inſtitution: much benefit will ariſe to the ſtate. Many are uſually called together at this ſeaſon, according to annual cuſtom, to receive full teſtimony of their education in their reſpective degrees compleated; to be diſmiſſed, as it were, by their common parent, with their ſeveral credentials, to their reſpective employments and profeſſions in life: ſome ſtill to be retained within her walls for the education of others. May all, as they regard their common parent, who nurtured them, as they deſire to promote the glory of God, or the good of the ſtate, be conſcientiouſly faithful in their reſpective provinces! And may every one who enjoys any office in this place, uſe his utmoſt endeavours to cultivate herein true religion, uſeful learning, every ſocial, civil, and private virtue; in ſhort, whatſoever things are juſtly eſteemed praiſeworthy within your own gates; and whatſoever things may be of good report abroad!

Let

Let this be thy aim, and let this be thy praiſe, O ancient city of ſcience! Theſe things if thou doſt regularly conſult, and zealouſly promote; then, of the ſons, whom thou ſendeſt forth, many will daily add to thy reputation: and they that proſper by thy inſtructions, will, upon every good occaſion, be ready to ſhew, that they love thee: they will pray for *peace within thy walls*; and no good man will envy plenteous encouragement within thy gates: Many *even for their brethren, and companions ſake will wiſh thee proſperity: yea, becauſe of the houſe of the Lord our God, they will ſeek to do thee good.*

FINIS.

BRITISH MUSEUM

Lately publiſhed,
By the ſame AUTHOR,

I. The Nature and Reaſonableneſs of the Inward Call and Outward Miſſion to the Holy Miniſtry conſidered: the 2d. Edit.

II. The Natural Effect, and Religious Improvement of extraordinary Divine Judgments, and of Solemn Faſts inſtituted in Remembrance of them.

III. The Expediency of the Miraculous Powers of the Chriſtian Fathers: And the Inexpediency of thoſe that are claimed by the Church of Rome: in two Diſcourſes.

IV. Two Diſcourſes on the Moſaick Hiſtory of the Fall.

V. The Grounds of Submiſſion to Government, the Origin of the different Modes of Civil Polity, and the Happineſs of our own Form of Legiſlature in particular. An Inauguration Sermon, *June* 11. 1752.

VI. A Letter and Dialogue on the New Stile.

VII. The Pleaſures of Gratitude and Benevolence improved by Church-Muſick. A Sermon at the Meeting of the three Choirs of *Glouceſter*, *Worceſter* and *Hereford*. *Sept.* 12. 1753.

VIII. Two Diſcourſes, before the Univerſity of *Oxford*, on the Nature, Evidences and Importance of Truth: in which are contained Remarks upon ſome Paſſages in the Writings of the late Lord Viſcount *Bolingbroke*: Publiſhed at the Requeſt of the Vice-Chancellor and Heads of Houſes.

Printed for JAMES FLETCHER;
And ſold by R. BALDWIN, in *Pater-noſter-row*.

Lately published,
By the same AUTHOR,

I. The Nature and Reasonableness of the Inward Call and Outward Action to the Holy Ministry considered: in Six Letters.

II. The Natural Effect, and Religious Improvement of extraordinary Divine Judgments, and of Solemn Fasts Indicted in Remembrance of them.

III. The Impiety of the Methodist Perversion of the Christian Parliament: And the Inexpedience of those that are chosen by the Clergy of Rome, in our Language.

IV. Two Discourses on the Blessed Hope of the Just.

V. The Certainty of Believing as Christians, the Origin of the different Modes of Christianity, and the Impossibility of our own Form of Religion in particular. An Investigation Sermon, January 1, 1752.

VI. A Letter and Dialogue on the New Sails.

VII. The Pleasure of Gratitude and Benevolence improved by Church-Music. A Sermon at the Meeting of the three Choirs of Gloucester, Worcester and Hereford. Sept. 12, 1751.

VIII. Two Discourses, before the University of Oxford, on the Nature, Evidence and Importance of Truth: in which are contained Remarks upon some Passages in the Writings of the late Lord Viscount Bolingbroke: Published at the Request of the Vice-Chancellor and Heads of Houses.

Printed for JAMES FLETCHER;
And sold by R. BALDWIN, in Paternoster-Row.